



# Keeping Children Safe: Safeguarding in School

A guide for parents



*We have produced this guide to explain how we work to ensure the safety and well being of the children in our school. The guide seeks to set out our legal obligations and how we fulfill them.*

June 2015



‘Caring for all...Growing with God’ sits at the heart of all we do in school. As a school community we look to support one another for the best of our children.

We know that parenting isn’t always easy and none of us get it right all the time. As a strong, caring community we recognise that it is important to support each other, both offering and asking for help, sometimes this isn’t easy.

As a school we have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in school are safe and appropriately cared for, both within school and at home. This is our ‘safeguarding responsibility’. As part of our commitment to your children we will respond to all concerns that are raised.

As you would expect we observe all our children’s development. This includes their academic, social, emotional and physical wellbeing. Where there are concerns we have a statutory obligation to act and may seek further professional advice and support to ensure a child’s well-being.



Effective parent/school relationships are vital and these depend on good communication. We have school leaders on the gate every day and a wide range of contact methods available to parents. From time to time children have accidents as they explore the world and grow; when this happens in school we send home a welfare slip or phone to speak with an adult. Please also let us know, promptly, if your child has had an accident, incident, significant stressful event or come to any harm. This will help us give the best support to your child and your family.



### **What do we do in school if we are concerned?**

Adults in school report any concern they have to the 'lead designated officer'. The lead designated officer is Mr Wright, the headteacher.

The lead designated officer determines what further action is needed. Where a child is thought to be in immediate risk of harm or to have suffered significant harm he/she will contact the local authority's social care team, the police or other relevant professional team. In most other cases the lead designated officer will contact the local authority child safeguarding advisors to determine what steps should be taken next. School staff are not expected to carry out any investigations, but are instead required to pass on concerns.

### **Will parents/carers be contacted in the first instance?**

Where a concern involves physical or sexual abuse parents carers may not be contacted first.

In most other cases, parents will be contacted in advance of any onward referral.

When a concern is discussed with the local authority child safeguarding advisors or with Early Help Hounslow, some contact and contextual information may be shared during the discussion.

### **What concerns might staff share?**

Staff may share a range of concerns. As professionals used to working with children they will use their judgement to monitor the children in their care. Some of the common concerns raised by staff may include a physical mark on the body, a change in behaviour or an emotional change, if a child is not clean or has dirty clothes or a disclosure made to an adult in the school.

### **What is abuse?**

There are four main categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

**Physical abuse** is when somebody deliberately hurts or injures a child. It can include hitting, kicking, hair pulling, beating with objects, throwing and shaking.

**Emotional Abuse** is when someone is always putting a child down, shouting at them or making them feel bad about themselves.

**Sexual Abuse** is when a child or young person is pressurised, forced, tricked or coerced into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or another young person.

**Neglect** is if children are not getting enough of the important things that they need at home such as food, clothing, supervision, protection, etc. Inadequate care could mean that the child is being neglected.

Some of these categories may manifest themselves suddenly, whilst others may occur over time.

More details of the four types of abuse can be found on the Childline Website:

<http://www.childline.org.uk/>





## Frequently Asked Questions

### What should I do if I am concerned about my own family/situation?

Family life can be very difficult; financial, housing, employment, illness and relationship issues can put a strain on even the strongest family. Many families have friends they can turn to for help, however, at times this may not be sufficient.



The staff team at school are happy to offer advice and support and to lend an ear if you wish to discuss a problem or difficulty. We can only bring our knowledge and experience and are not trained counselors.

There are a host of charities and other organisations that are there to help when things get difficult. *Early Help Hounslow* is the gateway to all support services offered by the local authority. Anybody can contact *Early Help Hounslow* either on the telephone: 020 8583 6600 option 1, by email:

[earlyhelp@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@hounslow.gov.uk) or in person at: 88

Lampton Road, Hounslow.

In addition the local authority publishes a 'local offer'. This sets out the services offered by all providers for the welfare and support of children in the borough. The local offer can be found at: <http://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/kb5/hounslow/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=2341>

If you or a member of your family are at immediate risk of harm, you should phone the police on 999.

### What can I do if I am concerned about another child?

If the child attends our school, you may wish to discuss your concerns with the lead designated officer (Mr Wright).

Any adult can discuss a concern either with their local social care team or through a charity such as the NSPCC. The social care team in Hounslow can be contacted through Early Help Hounslow on: 020 8583 6600 option 1. The NSPCC can be contacted on: 0808 800 5000.



Children can discuss concerns with the agencies above, but also with Childline, a dedicated charity for children. Childline can be contacted on: 0800 1111

If you have a concern do act on it. Don't wait for confirmation of your concerns.

### What can I do if I am concerned about a member of staff?

If you are concerned about a member of staff, speak with the headteacher. If your concern is about the headteacher, you should speak to the Chair of Governors. Contact details for the Chair of Governors can be obtained from the school office.



**Can I express a concern about another child anonymously?**

In addressing a concern, the Local Authority's care team may want to gather information from the person raising the concern. All information shared is kept confidential.

**Can the school 'bring in' a social worker when they have a concern?**

Put simply, no. Raising a concern does not automatically involve a social worker and schools are not in a position to 'bring in' social workers. Any concern shared with the social care team will be assessed by that team, however, they may choose to send a social worker or other professional to the school to meet with the child and/or the parents.

**Can a social worker or other professional visit my child in school without my permission?**

In most cases visits to school by social workers or other professionals are arranged with the consent of the parent. In some instances, where concerns are significant, social workers and other professionals can come to meet a child without parental permission. The school has a legal obligation to facilitate these meetings.

**Find out more...**

The NSPCC has a wealth of information on child welfare and safeguarding, including a series of guidance leaflets on parenting. Their website is: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>

**Finally**

We, like you, want the best for your children. We want to see them thrive, grow and develop, filled with awe and excitement as they explore the world around them. We want them to achieve well, in safety, knowing that they are loved and cared for. We know that parenting isn't always easy, but supporting each other and working together helps. Let's do this for your children.

'Caring for all...Growing with God'

An electronic version of this booklet is downloadable from the school website:

<http://www.stpauls.hounslow.sch.uk/>

Safeguarding support agencies:

